

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Wallsburg and Its Founder

Communities that grew up in western frontier lands often were christened with names of outstanding people who influenced the development of the area. Many cities, towns and villages can trace their names to a famous explorer, a courageous colonizer, perhaps a military officer or even some prominent political or religious leader.

However, few communities have a more illustrious namesake than does Wallsburg, a settlement of about 300 persons located 14 miles south of Heber City.

The town is named for William Madison Wall, a native of North Carolina, who, during his lifetime, was an explorer, colonizer, military officer, political official and Church leader.

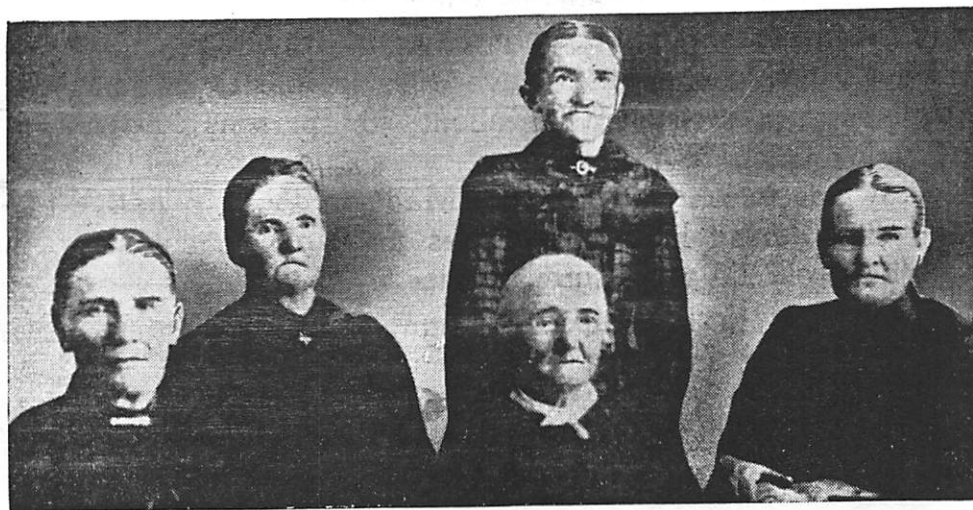
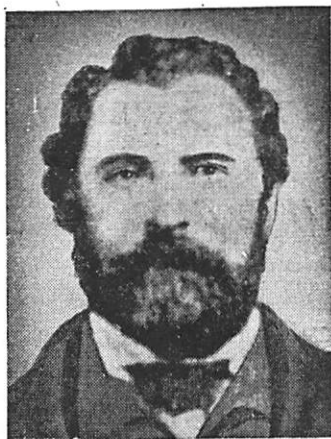
He was born in Rockingham County, North Carolina, Sept. 30, 1821, a son of Isaac and Nancy Wall, and joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the age of 21. He lived with the saints in Nauvoo, Ill., until their exodus in 1846-47 and came to the Utah Territory in 1850 as a captain of fifty people in the seventh pioneer company. He also assisted in organizing the Mormon Battalion.

When he arrived in the new territory, Wall made his way to Provo where he established a home. He was soon appointed Bishop of the Provo Fourth Ward and served from 1852 to 1854. He was captain of a cavalry company in the territorial militia and served a number of military missions. Then in 1856 he was called by the Church to serve as a missionary to Australia where he was president of the New South Wales Conference.

When he returned from Australia, Elder Wall was placed in charge of a company of Mormon immigrants. As they arrived in California they found animosity toward the Church at a fever pitch. A train of immigrants bound for California had been killed in southern California in what became known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

When the Mormons were discovered by some of the residents in San Pedro, California, where Elder Wall and his company had landed, mob violence broke out. Even though the Mormons had just arrived that day, the angered citizens demanded the life of Elder Wall.

Twice during the night the mobs tried to break into his hotel room to kill him. Elder Wall was unarmed, so he tore a wooden roller from his bed and in a calm voice told the angered people outside the door that he knew the door was flimsy and they could easily break in. How-



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ever, he warned them that the first one to break in would be killed. No one volunteered to be first.

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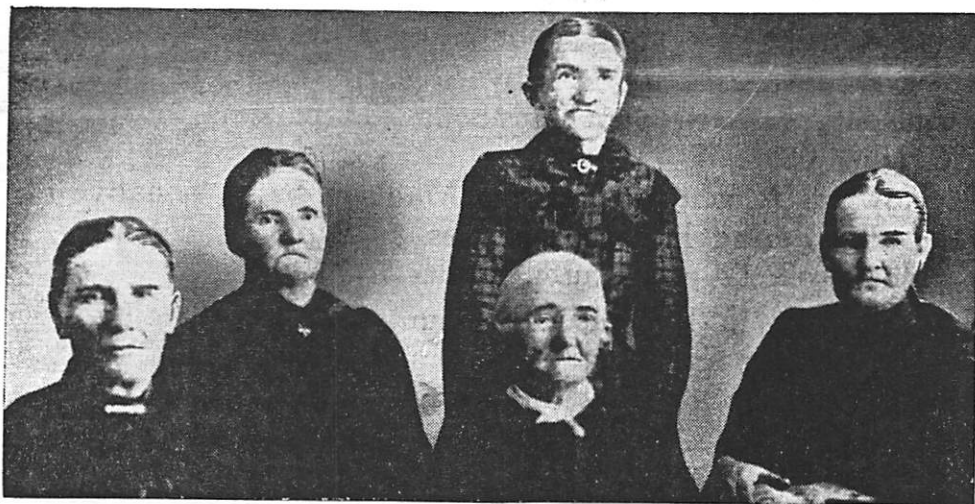
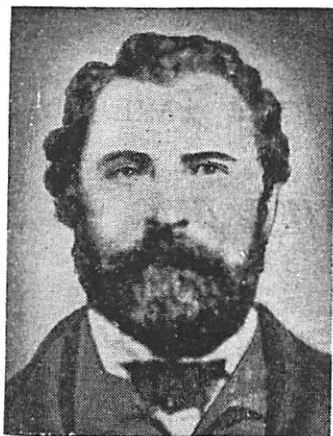
"I had one little wish to impress upon their minds, and that was that some of them had to die in the operation and I did not wish to kill any man that had a drop of honest blood in him; if there were any such men I begged them to withdraw and let the worst hounds they had remain to do the deed, as I should certainly kill three or four."

Apparently all in the mob felt honest for Elder Wall went free.

Returning to Provo, he was appointed marshal of Provo and then sheriff of Utah County.

His tenure as sheriff was often bullet-punctuated since the friction between Mormons and anti-Mormons was high, and federal troops commanded by General Johnston were also stationed in Utah County.

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evening when W. M. Wall, Marshal of Provo, was walking through the streets of that city a ball was shot through his hat and grazed his head and knocked him down."

Wall was also one of the most skillful Indian negotiators among the Mormons and frequently served assignments for President Brigham Young in pacifying the Indians. Many of his dealings with the Indians are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

"Provo" Valley was discovered early in the 1850's by three men who climbed the Wasatch Range from Big Cottonwood canyon and descended the western slopes of the valley. Their report created much interest and ways were immediately sought to get into the valley. By 1855 or '56 the pioneers began taking their cattle in via an Indian trail that began near Pleasant Grove, up Grove Creek over the northwest end of Timpanogos, down Bear canyon to the left fork of American Fork canyon, up this canyon to the summit and thence down into the Midway area.

On the 19th of January 1855 the State Legislature incorporated the Provo Canyon Road Co. which authorized Aaron Johnson, Thomas S. Williams, Evan M. Green and William Wall to build a road up Provo Canyon. Very little was done at this time, however. In June of 1856 William M. Wall was called on a mission to serve in Australia. He returned late in 1857, having been called home because of the Johnston's Army affair. Early in 1858, he and others began talking about the "road" again and on June 8, 1858 Brigham Young called a meeting at Provo, organized a new Company and work was started immediately. The road was to go from Provo through Provo Canyon to the Kamas Bench and thence on to the "Mormon Trail" in Weber Canyon. \$19,000.00 was allocated for the cost of the road, much of which was paid for in "Deseret Script."

A large bridge in Provo Canyon was completed about the 13th of October and by the 12th of Nov. 1858 the road was near enough completed that "100 teamsters started for the United States over the new road." (Deseret News, Nov. 12, 1858).

The first group of settlers to go into the valley over the new road were George Washington Bean, William Meeks, Aaron Daniels and William Wall. The Beans and Walls settled near the neck of the canyon in the south end of the valley, where they had established their headquarters during the construction of the road. Daniels and Meeks went further north.

George Washington Bean, a surveyor and Indian interpreter, had with his brother, James, been very active in getting the new road built. George W. Bean was the first to take up ground in Round Valley and in the fall of 1860 he sold his holdings in Provo Valley to his father-in-law, William M. Wall, so he could spend his entire efforts improving his holdings in Round Valley. He mentions in his writings about having to go by way of Salt Lake City and Park City to get to their ranch because of the floods of 1862. By 1864 he was no longer in Round Valley.

It was in 1860 that Wm. M. Wall moved his family and all their belongings to what was called Round Valley. The valley was practically enclosed by mountains and was an ideal place to graze cattle because of the protective hills.

Because these first settlers still had property and interests in Provo and Heber they were in Round Valley only part of the time but by the winter of 1864-5 it became a permanent settlement, with at least five families staying there that winter. They were the Walls, George and Emma Brown, the William Jasper Borens, Dixon H. Greers and one or possibly two other families. The men had been so busy building homes and buildings that they failed to get enough hay put up for their cattle to winter on. Before spring broke their livestock were on the verge of starvation so they diverted the warm water of Spring Creek out onto the meadows, melting the two feet deep snow from the grass and saved their stock.

Because of his leadership ability, Elder Wall was called to serve as the Presiding Elder in Provo Valley and was responsible for all the Church activity in the new area. He served until 1861 when Joseph S. Murdock was sent by President Brigham Young to be bishop of the new ward in Heber. Elder Wall continued as presiding elder in Round Valley until his death Sept. 18, 1869.

Among the early settlers in Round Valley were Enoch Gurr, Dixon Greer and James Gurr and their families. Later came J. W. Boren, Moses Mecham, Edward Stokes, James and Reuben Allred, Guy Kaiser, George Brown, Luke Burdick and Francis Kerby. These settlers and their families believed that they could easily cultivate all the land in the valley and so they discouraged others from coming in.

However, they soon found that the water supply was sufficient and that the community needed more people to build socially as well as financially. So the Battys, Mechams and Bigelows, Martin Ford, William Stoker, John Davis, James Burnes, James Wheeler and the Thompsons came in, bringing their families.

These and others busily engaged in building homes, clearing the land of logs and sagebrush and planting their crops.

One Sunday afternoon in the Spring of 1865 as Elder Wall was conducting the Sabbath meeting, a messenger came from Heber City with word that the Indians were on the warpath under the direction of Chief Black Hawk and his brother, Chief Tabby. The instructions were for the people to leave Round Valley and come to Heber. So, under the direction of Elder Wall, the people packed what belongings they could and left the next morning for Heber.

Just a few months previously, James Ailred and his wife Jennie had buried their little daughter, Clara. Her death was the first in Round Valley and brought much sorrow to the people. When the order came to move to Heber, "Aunt Jennie" as she was known, said she felt great disappointment in leaving the little grave, not knowing whether she

would ever see it again. As the wagons moved out of Round Valley she kept looking back until they passed over a hill and could no longer see the settlement. Then she cried all the way to Heber. Now and then the Indians had stolen some of the cattle from the people, but generally left the people alone. However, the settlement was at least a day's wagon ride away from the other settlers in the valley, so it was decided in 1865 to build a fort for protection. Twenty families moved into the fort area when it was finished later that year.

Crops had been planted in Round Valley and so the men came back as often as they felt it was safe, and irrigated the fields. They reported that in their lonely travels between Heber and Round Valley they never once encountered an Indian.

As they came back to their homes they decided to build a meeting house for their Church services, school use and entertainment. Bringing cottonwood logs from the river bottoms and using mud to fill in the cracks the people put up the one room log house inside the fort walls.

As they plastered the mud on the walls they had to build fires and keep them going all night to dry the mud. The men said they would not consent to stay all night and keep the fires going unless the women folk stayed also. The women said they would agree to stay providing they could dance. So it was agreed, and they spent the entire night celebrating the completion of their Church house by dancing. A Brother Stocks furnished the music on his violin, but he only knew two tunes, "The Soldier's Joy" and "Irish Washer Woman." He played these over and over again all night.

Jennie Allred and Harriette Greer were the only two who could waltz, so they entertained the others with their waltz steps. Bro. Stocks couldn't play any waltz tunes so the ladies whistled melodies in three-quarter time for their waltzing. They all participated in the square dances. When the valley was first settled the farming was done on a cooperative basis. All the men worked together on the land and then at harvest time the crops were divided equitably among the families of the community. However, after a few years the farm land was divided into 20 and 40 acre tracts and the settlers applied for homesteading rights. With the organization of a ward of the Church July 15, 1877 and the appointment of Bishop William E. Nuttall the people began looking for a suitable name for their ward and community. It was unanimously decided that Round Valley from henceforth should be Wallsburg in honor of the illustrious William Madison Wall, founder and "first citizen" of the community.